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EDITORIAL SECTION

The improvements to be noted in the present issue are only indications of better things to come. We will continue the policy of giving serious consideration to all important art matters, yet in a readable, perhaps even entertaining way, while also devoting our attention to collecting in general. The magazine will contain the right kind of art news, the "Bookcraft" department will appeal to all book-lovers, as well as to book-collectors, and an attractive feature will be found in the space soon to be devoted to Interior Decoration.

THE artistic possessions of the United States are far greater than is imagined by those who do not closely follow the importation of works of art into this country. The best things are not in public museums. Private collections contain treasures of which the public knows nothing, and they are being added to constantly. When dealers secure on the other side especially fine and costly paintings or other works of art it is their custom to import them quietly, and then to notify some rich collector of the prize to be had. In the majority of cases these valuable articles are at once bought and transferred to the new owner's home, where they remain for the enjoyment of himself and his friends.

Of course, private possession is right and proper. The plea that the highest works of genius belong to humanity, and not to a select few, sounds very beautiful but it does not pertain to practical life; what is bought and paid for is subject to the decision of the man who bought and paid for it.

And yet an appeal should be made to these owners for a liberal interpretation of what may be called their guardianship of much of the world's genius. Is it not possible for them to share with the public, at least occasionally, the pleasure they derive from their possessions? It is not always feasible to open private galleries to the public. Loan collections are sometimes, but not very often, exhibited for charitable purposes, but on these occasions the price of admission is a deterrent to general appreciation.

There is a way in which the private owners of New York and vicinity may share their treasures with the public. It is by loaning to the Metropolitan Museum, for a longer or a shorter period, even if only for a few weeks, their best paintings or other works of art. I have no doubt but that if sufficient interest were taken, a permanent gallery would be set aside for a loan collection room, the contents of which naturally would be changed constantly, but which would be one of the most attractive features of the museum. There are at present a number of loaned pictures on exhibition at the Metropolitan, their owners having followed Mr. George A. Hearn's generous example, and in Brooklyn Mr. A. A. Healy and Mr. Carl H. De Silver are prominent in their loans to the Institute, but there are scores of owners in New York—and what I say of local conditions obtains in all cities where there is a museum or a public library—who could communicate with the director of the museum and express their willingness to have some of their treasures placed on public view.

I offer this suggestion for the benefit of the public at large, whose education in matters artistic would be greatly augmented by such a display of liberal public spirit by the owners of works of art of superior worth.

Native artists should feel gratified at a discovery which I made while abroad this summer: that European art collectors are manifesting a well-defined curiosity in the product of American painters who stay at home. The American artists who

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reside abroad have a good clientele, according to their merits, but it seems to be dawning upon European amateurs that perhaps there are others. Naturally, I was enthusiastic in my replies to these enquiries, and, further, in my efforts to aid my foreign subscribers in the selection of men whose work should appear in European collections.

It has given me intense gratification to have been told that several collections of American paintings have been started as a result of my persistent advocacy of our native art, and I shall keep on hammering at the subject.

Buy American paintings, as well as foreign canvases! Don't do this from motives of patriotism or of philanthropy—to help the poor devils along—but because American paintings will give American collectors as much pleasure, and often more, than foreign paintings.

It is not necessary to buy work by the leading men only, or by those whose post-mortem reputations have placed them in a position that cannot be questioned. Many artists now little known will have as great a vogue as they, in the days to come.

Study the columns of this magazine month by month and note the names of the artists recorded here—none but those worthy of your appreciation will be even mentioned—and you will gain a true idea of what American art is doing and how to fill your walls with pictures that will give you pleasure and profit, and at a reasonable cost. I cannot overemphasize my conviction that American paintings of merit are the best to buy at present.

An interesting reflection comes to mind in the report that one of the new acquisitions of the Metropolitan Museum is William M. Chase's "Carmencita," a gift of Sir William C. Van Horne. It may be remembered that this picture appeared last spring in the Blumenstiel sale. While easily worth several thousand dollars—for it is one of the best things Chase ever painted—it was bought by Mr. Lanthier for only \$220! The next day Mr. Louis

Ehrich, who had been unable to be present at the sale, offered an advance on the purchase-price, which was accepted, and the following day it was sold by him to the famous Canadian collector.

Here was a museum picture going, begging for one-tenth its value.

It is curious that another Metropolitan Museum accession shared the same fate—the "Portrait of a Cardinal" which hangs in the Marquand Room and was presented by the late Stanford White. This painting was bought very far below its value at one of the Ehrich sales—and it is a museum picture, too.

A somewhat similar incident occurred at the Ehrich sale of last year. No. 56, "Professor Thomas Gregory," by Sir Henry Raeburn, was knocked down to the highest bidder, who happened to be sitting beside me, for \$3,300. Before the gentleman left the room he was offered \$5,000, and I heard later that the following week the offer had been raised to \$7,500.

All of which adds to my constant regret that the Rembrandt of the Jefferson sale, last May, was allowed to leave the country, and for \$20,000. Someone ought to bring it back; for \$40,000, if necessary; that is what the picture is worth. If this someone had only known it at the time!

Speaking of auctions, in a recent newspaper article we read of a Guido Reni being bought in a small auction room in London for \$9.70. It is well known that "The Entombment" by Michael Angelo, now in the National Gallery, for which the Trustees paid \$10,000, was originally bought by a Mr. Macpherson from an Italian dealer for a few dollars. The story of the famous "Holy Family" by Raphael, for which the Louvre paid \$40,000, is germane to the subject, as Morris Moore, from whom it was purchased, had paid only \$350 for the painting at auction. The dispute as to its attribution—some ascribing it to Mantegna—and the refusal of the National Gallery to buy it, have become art history.

Auction sales—those in New York as well as those in London and Paris—offer

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many opportunities for bargains, if one is rightly advised.

The "Society for the Suppression of Vice" should suppress Comstock.

Why is this man allowed free rein to follow his own devices? The matter of the suppression of the "licentious and vulgar" number of the Art Student's League magazine has been entirely beclouded by the contemptible manner in which Comstock has badgered and persecuted a young girl who happened to be in charge of the office.

If Comstock were sincere in his efforts to suppress vice with a capital "V" he would strike at the persons responsible for the publication which he rightly put under the ban. To attack a young woman who happened to be distributing the magazines is like arresting a newsboy for a libel committed by an editor.

Verily, Comstock is becoming impossible.

Several weeks ago a subscriber took me to task for my somewhat harsh criticism of the Royal Academy Exhibition, sweetening the pill of disapproval with some flattering remarks regarding the Collector, which I am too modest to repeat here.

I can't have been so very much out of the way in my views regarding the Academy, called Royal, if sales at exhibitions mean anything; for the reports have it that out of a total of more than 1800 paintings only 91 were sold, which is rather a poor showing.

The exterior color decoration of churches and public buildings is classic in usage. The temples of Greece and the ancient cathedrals of Italy were thus embellished. Architecture of the present day seemingly seeks to revive this method, as may be seen in the color scheme of a modern church recently completed in Madison Square.

The marvelous beauty to which this method may be carried was shown to me the other day by Mr. William Laurel

Harris, the artist who has charge of the interior decorations of the Paulist Father's Church on Columbus Avenue, at Fifty-ninth street and who has just returned from a several months stay in Italy. He showed me a photograph of the interior of the Cathedral of Orvieto, forty miles north of Rome, colored in exact reproduction of this ancient architectural monument. The effect of the mosaics, the vari-colored marbles and the other color decorations, which are carried to the top of the spires, is wonderful—astonishing!

I was also greatly impressed by a view of the interior decorations of the Cathedral of Monreale, eight miles from Palermo. This edifice seems to have been the prototype of the New York church which Mr. Harris is decorating. It is gratifying, indeed, since the Catholic faith believes in beautifying its houses of worship, that we have in New York a building that may well be considered a pattern for other communities to copy. We have, in America, artists capable of undertaking the decorations of churches, which generally have the majestic quality of massiveness, and such work might eventually inspire designs of lofty grandeur. We already have mural painters who could entirely satisfy the demands of ecclesiastical convention with work strengthened by the results of modern thought.

In an article in the October Art Journal is the following novel suggestion for collectors: "I do not hesitate to say that the ingenuity of collectors in the discovery of new fields as yet untrodden having been exhausted, there is still open to them that of collecting the finest specimens of forged or spurious works of art, and that this is capable of becoming a hobby scarcely less interesting or admirable than the pursuit of the genuine article. Nor is it one to be sneered at or despised. It is hardly too much to assert that there have been masters in the art of the *vieux neuf* little, if at all, inferior to the greatest amongst acknowledged artists."